

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot *Northampton County, PA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 150 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected Northampton County for a Brownfields Pilot. The county is located in the east-central area of Pennsylvania in a region known as Lehigh Valley. The valley has a long history of industry, including mining, rail construction, iron production, milling, cement production, and steel production. A decline in heavy industry has left properties abandoned or underutilized; businesses are reluctant to use these sites due to unknown environmental issues.

The region has established a Lehigh Valley Brownfields Strategy Task Force and several committees to address redevelopment concerns. The Task Force estimates that there are approximately 1,067 acres of underused and abandoned industrial sites, many of them in urban areas. It has identified 72 potential brownfields sites in the region; the Pilot will focus on assisting the Task Force with educational outreach, and examining the assessment, cleanup and redevelopment opportunities at these sites.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Pilot is to assist the Lehigh Valley Brownfields Strategy Task Force in maintaining a continuously evolving inventory of brownfields sites with redevelopment potential. The

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Northampton County,
Pennsylvania*

Date of Announcement:
May 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: Lehigh Valley contains over 1,000 acres of identified brownfields; the Pilot will target 2-3 sites for site investigations and cleanup plans.

Contacts:

Northampton County
Development
Corporation
(610) 253-4213

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 3
(215) 566-3129

Visit the EPA Region 3 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/brownfld/hmpage1.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

Pilot will assist the county in its plans to prepare an inventory of sites suitable for cleanup and redevelopment, and gather stakeholder input on redevelopment priorities. The county intends for these efforts to result in the establishment of a permanent and sustainable regional organization. EPA funds will be used to perform environmental assessments, and to educate owners, developers, potential investors, community leaders and other stakeholders. The county expects that the increased attractiveness of brownfields redevelopment will curb sprawl and slow the rapid development of greenfield properties.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments of priority sites, and follow-up assessment and characterization to determine the extent of environmental liability;
- Preparing an inventory of county brownfields;
- Educating stakeholders, including potential developers, potential investors, community leaders, and the public, to dispel the myths regarding old industrial sites as well as to inform them about resources available for investigation and cleanup of brownfields;
- Creating workshops, a clearinghouse of information and resources, and site investigation and cleanup plans; and
- Cooperating with groups such as the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, the Northampton County Development Corporation, and other economic development corporations in the valley to ensure input from a variety of stakeholders, including businessmen, engineers, planners, county and city officials, economic development specialists, utility representatives, consultants, and college interns.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.